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Ltr fm Deposed Imam of Yemen re support for movement
which the Imam leads against the Yemen Arab Republic



DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

March 12, 1964

S/S 3952

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. McGEORGE BUNDY
THE WHITE HOUSE

Subject: Transmission of Letter from the Deposed
Imam of Yemen to the President

Enclosed are the Arabic original and an English translation of a letter to the President from the deposed Imam of Yemen which was delivered to the Department on March 10 by Royalist Yemeni Prince Abdul Rahman Iban Yahya for transmission to the White House. The letter requests support for the dissident movement which the Imam leads against the Yemen Arab Republic with which we have friendly relations.

The Department recommends that no response be made.


Benjamin H. Read
Executive Secretary

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Enclosures:

Arabic original and
translation of letter.

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Don L. Christensen
forBenjamin H. Read
Executive Secretary

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ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE ARABIC ORIGINAL LETTER OF HIS
MAJESTY THE IMAM MOHAMMED AL-BADR, KING OF YEMEN TO THE
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, LYNDON B. JOHNSON

In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate

President Lyndon B. Johnson
The White House
Washington, D. C.
The United States of America

Mr. President:

It is my hope that you will accept my best regards for yourself and my esteem for your great people, as I avail myself of the occasion of your assumption of the presidency of the American Republic, to wish you divine guidance and success in the leadership of the free world toward peace and security. And we express this wish with confidence in your reputation for steadfastness, strength, experience and accomplishments.

At the same time, I consider it of importance to explain to Your Excellency our point of view concerning the problem which resulted in bloodshed in our dear country, at the hands of foreign aggressors, whose aim is domination, in the course of their dreams of imperialist expansion.

We assumed the administration of our country (after receiving support from the ulema, the chiefs, sheikhs and notables of the tribes, and from other citizens of all walks of life and classes, who, collectively, represent the great majority of the Yemenite people), with clear understanding of the great responsibilities resting upon us. And we fully understood the needs of the times and the necessity for reforms and progress in our country, utilizing the means which God had placed at our disposal and the assistance of trustworthy friendly powers, particularly the United States. And we determined, from the first day of our assumption of these heavy responsibilities, to enforce orderly reforms in the administration, in accordance with modern usages, in order to insure Yemen's catching up with the more advanced nations, while safeguarding the country's independence, religion and beliefs.

While we were attempting to accomplish this, a small group, in foreign pay, carried out a foreign-directed conspiracy, with the objection of thwarting our reform program in the interest of their own imperialistic aims before our reforms should have destroyed their last chance. This plot was carried out by a few low-ranking officers under the direction of outside sources uninterested in the welfare of Yemen or the peace and security of the area.

Our country was thereby engulfed in a series of bloody massacres and exposed from that day to this to destruction by heavy armaments in Egyptian hands. These same hands we once believed to be well-intentioned toward us, until they shed the blood of the people of our country, destroying their houses, burning their crops, and forcing them to take refuge in caves and wastelands. This has also resulted in the spreading of epidemics and diseases among more than a million unarmed and peaceable citizens. The victims of this war who have lost their lives now number over 60,000 souls, most of them from the poor, and from innocent women, children and elderly persons, while there remain in the prisons of the occupation forces more than 3,000 civilians.

All of this was abetted by those who fish in troubled waters, the Communist bloc--and in particular, the Soviet Union--who supported the aggressors and supplied them with personnel, destructive weapons, and by every other means at their disposal. It is clear that the Soviet Union has military experts in Yemen, among whom are pilots who subject our people to destructive bombing raids. One of the clearest proofs of this is the Soviet-built air base north of Sana'a.

Your Excellency is certainly not unaware of the dangers of a center here for the spreading of subversive doctrines of atheistic Communism, which are rejected by all believers in God and by those who cherish spiritual values, and which they are attempting to impose on our people, within the sight and hearing of the free world.

Mr. President, we had, in the past certain relations with these Communist regimes, based on our trusting nature and on the advice of one whom, until the last minute, we considered a trustworthy friend and brother Arab, devoted to the best interests of the Arabs and to the peace and stability of their countries. Undoubtedly this was an unfortunate experience from which we have suffered and from which we have learned a lesson which we can never forget in the course of our future international relations.

I also consider it of importance to assure Your Excellency of my belief that close cooperation between your country, under your own wise leadership, and our country, under conditions of re-established stability and such leadership as our beloved people designate, is and should be our constant goal. I wish to further confirm to Your Excellency the fact that I have never doubted that a strong and close relationship between our countries should be the foundation on which my government should base its internal reform program and its international relations policies.

Our relations should not follow any other course, and I still believe in spite of this cloud that has passed, that they will be resumed on a closer and stronger basis, in accordance with what is imposed by the higher interests of the two countries.

We do not feel that in all justice and fairness you can hold us responsible for the wrongs of the past, which had their origins in their own set of circumstances, knowing, as you must, our own good will vis a vis the interests of the country in both interior and foreign affairs, and knowing that the great majority of the people support us. We say this in the belief that you also know that we have continued to hold all the liberated areas of our country, as well as gaining new victories in different regions, in spite of the blocking of supplies from our brother Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as testified by the United Nations observers reports, and in spite of the fact that nine months have now passed since the start of the disengagement agreement which was supposed to have been fulfilled in only four months.

The fact that seventeen months have now passed, in which the Yemenite people have continued their fight against foreign forces, should be accepted as clear evidence that they are determined to demand their liberty, freedom and independence and to support their legitimate government. And I should make it clear to Your Excellency that the situation will never be stable, in spite of whatever reaches your ears to the contrary, until the Yemenite people have the opportunity to decide by themselves their own destiny, subsequent to the withdrawal of the occupation forces from their land and the lifting of every foreign hand which is putting pressure on them and attempting to direct them.

It is impossible to find any other solution for the resumption of peace and stability in Yemen, no matter how long a time passes and no matter how diversified are other proposals which might be advanced.

Mr. President, I firmly hope that the above points will be realized, and that they will successively emerge from the field of theory to the field of action as soon as better circumstances prevail. I should further welcome the arrival of any plenipotentiary emissary of Your Excellency when circumstances so permit, for my belief will never be shaken that the concern of your country, under your wise guidance, for the real freedom and right of self-determination of all peoples, will result in a good response to my letter to Your Excellency.

And please accept, Your Excellency, the reiteration of my great respect and esteem for yourself and for your nation.

7 Ramadan, 1383,
Corresponding to the
22nd day of January, 1964.

Written at the
Royal Headquarters
Yemen.

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